UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.: GENERAL
E/ECA/CM.13/49/Summary
20 January 1987
Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Eighth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
13 - 20 April 1987

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-second session of the Commission/ thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23 - 27 April 1987

Item 6 of the provisional agenda**

-C/NAIROBI

PRIORITY TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME FOR LAND-LOCKED AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Executive Summary

* E/ECA/TPCW.8/1.
** E/ECA/CM.13/1.

87-613

1. United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/150, operative paragraph 9(c) and ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 464(XVIII), operative para. 9(d), both inter alia requested the ECA Executive Secretary to urgently prepare a programme on transport and communications for the benefit of the land-locked African countries.

2. In compliance with above mandate and conscious of the fact that UNCTAD is the specialized UN agency with overall responsibility for land-locked developing countries, ECA sought its collaboration in preparing the priority programme. On the basis of this collaboration a team of UNCTAD experts visited all the African landlocked countries in May to July 1985 to assess the specific needs and identify the particular problems of the land-locked countries, prior to preparing the priority programme.

3. The priority programme was finalized during the second half of 1986 and summarised below are highlights of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the programme (E/ECA/CM.13/49)

4. Part I reviews the particular problems and needs of African land-locked countries by advancing some basic considerations and examining the main priority areas for action, viz: (i) integrated approach to transit transport development, (ii) road transport; (iii) rail transport, (iv) ports and storage facilities; (v) air transport; (vi) communications; (vii) documentation and procedures; (viii) management and training; and (ix) legal arrangements.

5. Part II of the programme is an analysis of the various transit transport corridor systems and identification of country specific priority programmes and projects, which covers the following countries: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African, Republic, Chad, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

6. Each of the country specific priority programme includes a critical analysis of all the primary and alternative transit transport corridors serving the country, a description of the existing infrastructure and facilities with the condition and capacities, a review of current and/or projected tranffic flows, and finally an identification of specific short - and mediumterm programmes/projects with estimated costs, designed to improve transit transport services in the country.

7. Part III of the priority programme deals with subregional technical assistance projects for the Southern African, East and Central African and West African subregions. These are projects whose scope cover an entire subregion and are of benefit to all member countries in the subregion.

8. The programme points out that although transit-transport problems have been issues of serious concern for a long time with respect to international legal implications of land-lockedness, it was within the last twenty years that greater awareness of the particular needs of the affected African countries was gained through effort by UNCTAD and ECA in drawing the attention of the international community to the unique difficulties faced by African land-locked nations.

9. The programme clearly recognises that the fourteen landlocked African countries belong to the category of poorest countries not only in the world but also in Africa and that eleven of them are categorized as least developed countries by the United Nations. The problems of these countries directly and indirectly result from:

(a) lack of direct territorial access to seaports, aggravated by great distances to the nearest transit ports;

(b) remoteness and isolation from world markets; and

(c) greater difficulties and comparative higher costs of their international transport services,

all of which constitute an impediment to their foreign trade and are the major causes of their relative poverty and a serious constraint to their economic and social development.

10. In general, the economic performance of these countries has deteriorated in recent years and per capita GDP of eight of them was below US$300 in 1983 compared with an average of US$800 for all developing countries.

11. In conclusion, the report recommends a priority transport and communication programmes for the African land-locked countries based on:

(i) an integrated approach, to transit transport development/planning and involving both transit and land-locked countries;

(ii) corridor-by-corridor approach - involving all modes, projects and related activities in entire corridors,

and urges maximum co-operation by the transit States and international assistance in the implementation of the priority programme.

12. The programme also recognises the benefits to be derived from and urges the harmonization of transit agreements so that they should contain uniform or similar clauses and provisions, the simplification and reduction of documentation and other control procedures and the joint training of management, administrative and other staff involved in transit transport operations and services, preferably in one or more regional/subregional institutions.

13. It should be pointed out that most of the projects and activities identified and/or recommended as the high priority by the programme are partly contained in the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade programme and in the SADCC programme. Some of the projects are already under execution under the auspices of the various programmes mentioned above and ECA and UNCTAD are actively involved in one or several aspects of these projects.